

# The Hunt for Green December



Early December, northern New Hampshire Sometime in the late 1950s.

Early December in the 1950s was a cold, snow covered place. It's time to come up with a Christmas tree for the coming holiday. For some reason older brother Bill was absent, probably already gone on his own or just off working for George Andrews in his junk yard in Jefferson. That left the household in the capable hands of an 80 pound, teen age sister Eileen ("Skinny Leen") and her Sargent, a slightly younger and slightly smaller Sheila. This was a formidable group and being younger and smaller than both, I accepted my place as obnoxious younger brother.

Procuring a Christmas tree was a little different in those days. To

## COÖS MEMORIES

GEORGE MATTHEWS

us, it meant going out into the woods and cutting one. It occurred to me much later in life, that since we had little land and no evergreens growing there on, that we were in fact stealing them! Local land owners were mostly poor farmers and didn't seem to object much. While it must have irked them that people helped themselves to small trees, it seemed to be accepted (at least from my point of view as a non-land owner).

I digress; back to the story!

The mission had been decided and it was time to implement the plan!

I remember there being a substantial amount of snow; enough to go over the top of those horrible, uninsulated, brown rubber "pull on" boots.

The weapon of choice was an ax. The choices were: ax, buck saw or two man crosscut. We had one of each and I still have all three originals today. There was little question that the answer was the ax. I should further explain that an ax was not the trim, handy one and three quarter pound Hudson Bay ax popular with campers of today! We had a four or five pound Sears and Roebuck ax with about a 30 inch handle. Quite sufficient to knock down

a five foot fir that was probably four inches through at the butt!

The area behind the house I still live in was made up of three small fields separated by stone walls, then a pasture (kids probably don't know the difference today!), two more fields which bordered woods where we used to go to pick giant, delicious blackberries with the local bears. Kids at that time were probably wilder than the bears so neither panicked much if they wound up sharing the same plant.

As this area was known to the group commander, that's where the actual search began. Eileen and Sheila carefully inspected every *Memories*, PAGE A9

## SUMMIT BY MORRISON AND THE MORRISON ASSISTED LIVING AND SKILLED NURSING CARE

*Caring for my spouse: When to seek help*



BY SHANNON LYNCH  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

"Through sickness and in health" is one of the vows we take on our wedding day, the first day of what we hope will be a lifelong journey with our husband or wife.

Nothing is more beautiful than the love and devotion of a couple who have been fortunate enough to age together. And through that jour-

ney, that vow to be there through sickness and health will be tested, especially in their senior years.

Becoming the caretaker for a spouse is more than honoring a vow. It is another sign of the bond developed between two people. But it can also be life changing. You may need to switch careers or even retire in order to devote the time necessary to care for your loved one.

The demands of being a caretaker are also physically and emotionally draining. Studies conducted by the Journal of American Medical Association (JAMA) and the Harvard School of Public Health have

shown that caring for a spouse over a long period of time can increase the risk of stress, depression and cardiovascular disease.

Because that bond between life partners is so strong, the spouse who is serving as caretaker will often compromise their own health and disregard signs that they need help. If you or someone you know is the primary caretaker for a spouse, ask these questions:

Are you missing or delaying your own medical appointments?

Are you unable to exercise or socialize?

Are you experiencing feelings of depression, loneliness or hopelessness?

Are you starting to feel resentment toward your spouse?

Are you finding family and friends less willing to help you provide care?

Answering yes to any of these questions is probably a sign that help is needed. Remember, asking for help is not a sign of weakness or a failure to uphold your

vows. In fact, it is quite the opposite. Giving your spouse excellent care has always been your priority. Asking for help is a way to honor that vow of being there for your spouse through sickness and in health.

There are long-term care options that can be introduced into your very own home, such as professional home aids and caregivers, renovations to your current home, as well as meal preparation and delivery services.

If you need even more

support, senior living communities may offer the services to ensure you and your spouse receive the best care, easing your burden and allowing you to focus on what really matters - each other.

If you feel you need help or want to better understand what kind of support is available, the New Hampshire ServiceLink ([www.servicelink.h.gov](http://www.servicelink.h.gov)) is a great resource, as is the toll-free National Caregiver Support Line (855-260-3274).

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